

Hobbies

Gold Kennedy 'half dollar' is only half the size of a dime

By Roger Boye

This week's column answers more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—I'm tempted to order a solid 14-karat gold Kennedy half dollar. It's advertised at \$10 plus \$2.50 for postage and is dated 1963-1993 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination. What do you think?

H.N., Chicago

A—Each "half dollar" measures 9 millimeters, about half the diameter of a dime, and contains less than \$3 worth of gold. Also, the company that issued the items has no connection with the United States Mint. You would

be buying a miniature round—not a real half dollar as the ad might suggest.

Q—I found a cache of old U.S. one-cent pieces in my grandfather's basement, including pennies dated 1822, 1833 and 1836, all larger than quarters. The coins are worn. Would they cover the down payment on a new car?

B.M., Orland Park

A—No, but they might pay for your first fill-up. Many U.S. cents from the early 1800s—including the three you listed—sell for no more than \$10 each in "good condition." Rare-coin prices are governed by the law of supply and demand, rather than a coin's age, and relatively few people col-

lect the "large cents."

Q—My husband has started collecting coins again after a 20-year lapse. What would make a good gift for him?

T.P., Evanston

A—Subscriptions to hobby publications are being discounted this holiday season by several companies.

The weekly Numismatic News is charging \$9.95 for 26 issues beginning with the first edition after Christmas, and the recipient also gets a free 1993 coin calendar. (A regular one-year subscription costs \$27.95.) Write to Krause Publications, 700 E. State St., Iola, Wis. 54990, or call, toll free, 1-800-258-0929.

Coin World, another weekly

newspaper, is selling one-year subscriptions at the regular price of \$26 and additional one-year subscriptions purchased thereafter at \$15 (Coin World, P.O. Box 4315, Sidney, Ohio 45365, or call 1-800-395-7904). The monthly Coinage magazine is offering 12 issues for \$17.95, down from the regular price of \$23 (Coinage, P.O. Box 6925, Ventura, Calif. 93006).

Coin collecting's most popular reference, R.S. Yeoman's "A Guide Book of United States Coins," now is available in soft cover for \$6.95 or hard cover for \$9.95. The 1993 (46th) edition is sold in most coin shops or can be ordered from Western Publishing Co., Inc., Whitman Coin Products, Department RB, P.O. Box 700, Racine, Wis. 53401. Include \$3 for postage.